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Immigrants to Citizens: the Indian Community in Grenada, 1857 to the Present

The Indian community is the largest minority group in Grenada. This group was first introduced during the second half of the nineteenth century when Grenada experimented with indentured labour. By the second half of the twentieth century Indians were so integrated into Grenada's society that a distinct Indian cultural identity was generally invisible. In addition, Indians were involved in every aspect of Grenadian life. This article examines the transition of the Indian community from the status of immigrants to citizens of Grenada under the following themes: the establishment of the Indo-Grenadian community, cultural and religious experience, race relations with the majority Afro-Grenadian population, and the contribution of Indians to Grenada's society.

The establishment of the Indian community

Grenada's sugar industry was overwhelmed with financial problems before the full emancipation of slaves in 1838, yet planters blamed emancipation for creating a shortage of labour which, in their view, was responsible for the collapse of the industry.[1] It was in this context that indentured labour schemes were introduced with the anticipation that

such labour would not only be cheaper and more easily controlled than the local black labour force but also to rejuvenate the sugar industry. Experiments were conducted with African, Maltese and Portuguese indentured labourers, but with little success.[2] Consequently, Indian indentured labour, which became the most successful labour scheme, was introduced in May 1857. A total of 3,200 Indians were imported into Grenada between 1857 and 1885.[3] However, over eighty-five per cent of these Indians remained permanently in Grenada after the labour scheme came to an end in 1890, consequently leading to the establishment of an Indian community in Grenada.[4] The Indian indenture system, therefore, served as the origin of a permanent Indian community in Grenada.

The acquisition of land became a main trend among Indians who settled in Grenada after the completion of their indenture requirements. From the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Indians acquired land in areas where they were concentrated during the period of indenture. Therefore, the parishes of St. Andrew's and St. Patrick's became relatively multicultural and multiracial zones in Grenada. From the early 1870s it was evident that a considerable number of Indians had already purchased lands and become growers of cocoa, provisions, and livestock.[5] In fact, the steady increase of land acquisition among Indians attracted the attention of the authorities because planters, who had anticipated continued control over Indian labour, even after the completion of their contracts, considered this phenomenon to be partly responsible for what transpired, namely the withdrawal of Indian labour from the sugar estates.[6] Clearly, Indian immigrants were establishing themselves as members of Grenada's peasantry and owners

of land in general. In addition, those who were unable to purchase lands were opting to rent:

> The coolie immigrants are now becoming a new class of peasantry settled in our midst, upon their small patches of land, or otherwise comparatively of easy and comfortable circumstances through their own industry, and as a whole indefatigable in their anxiety to hold position, to own lands, money, horses, and cattle—in the two first desires, they are fast succeeding, and the two latter, specimens can be produced worthy of admiration, and example….[7]

The sizes of these parcels of land were usually between one and ten acres.[8] This is understandable because the Indians, similar to the majority African population, were financially restricted from purchasing larger parcels of property. The general decline of Grenada's sugar industry during the second half of the nineteenth century provided the opportunity for labourers to purchase and/or rent lands. Bankrupt estates were forced to sell small parcels of land in order to pay debts and other expenses. In addition, estate owners who lost all hope in the profitability of sugar decided to sell their estates by dividing the land into small portions at relatively low rates.[9] Thus by 1881, a large amount of land in Grenada was cultivated by peasant proprietors. Accordingly, there were about 3,000 landowners owning from one to fifty acres, or, in other words, one in every three adult males in Grenada in the 1880s was a landowner.[10] These landowner and peasant groups were comprised of both Indians and Africans. The acquisition of land among Indians represented a sense of permanency and citizenship in Grenada.

Cultural and Religious experience

A Creole culture, born out of a history of African slavery and European hegemony, existed before the influx of Indian immigrants to Grenada.[11] It was this Creole world which Indians first encountered when they were introduced into Grenada. Out of this

encounter, in the course of time, Indians were incorporated into mainstream Grenadian society. Because of the way in which prevailing power relations structured the Indians' engagement with Grenadian society, the Indian cultural formation was placed in a subordinate relationship to the dominant Creole formation. Despite this subordinate relationship, elements of Indian culture were eventually incorporated into the Creole culture of Grenada.[12] Certain food items such as *roti, dhal (split peas)* and *curry* have remained comparatively visible. Similarly, a small degree of Indian music, song and dance was evident in the late twentieth century during the Rainbow City and St. Patrick's Day celebrations.[13] Indian elements in general, however, had become increasingly invisible by the second half of the twentieth century. This general invisibility of Indian culture and religion is a consequence of the cultural integration of the Indian community, a process so intense that by the 1950s Indians no longer displayed any particular loyalties to their former culture.[14] A number of factors have contributed to this phenomenon.

Firstly, the colonial government of Grenada in collaboration with the estate administration implemented a system through which Indians would, ultimately, be forced to abandon all aspects of their ancestral culture. The intention of this assimilative framework is reiterated in this statement made by a colonial official in 1862:

> What are we to do with these people? Leave them to grow up from year to year in worse than brutal ignorance? This would be wrong: we bring them hither, and we thus become responsible for their Christian instruction; not indeed, by coercion, but by the gentle and insinuating influences of our holy Christianity. Tolerate them not in their Hinduism!... does not our Christianity compel us to seek to benefit those barbarians thus placed within our reach…. It is not enough to depend on the docility of the coolies. That docility may co-exist with considerable subtlety and cunning.[15]

This effort to transform the Indian immigrants culturally was largely as a result of Grenada's white colonists wanting to impose their own Christian cultural values on a subordinated and economically poor Indian minority. Thus, a conscious programme of deculturation was intimately linked with Christianisation. Consequently, the *Association for the Instruction of Indian Immigrants* was established in April 1864.[16] This organisation functioned as the nucleus for implementing special strategies for Indian cultural transformation. The Association embraced all Christian denominations in Grenada and was aimed mainly at making the Indians into Christians:

> The character of our Association may be understood that our principle of membership is so broad as to embrace all religious denominations. We have no connexion with any sect. All may come under our flag…. The immigrants finding themselves objects of competition, would stand out for a high price, and would thus be petted and spoiled; whereas, seeing us actuated by a disinterested desire that they should know the truth and they are quick enough to see this, our power over their conscience will be without any drawback…. Our object is neither to make the immigrants Roman Catholics nor Protestants, but to bring their souls in contact with the word of God… to make them Christians....[17]

The *Association for the Instruction of Indian Immigrants* was responsible for providing the human and reading resources necessary for proselytising the Indians on the different estates. The success of this Association was limited but it was reported in January 1865 that in a church service "50 coolies attended; and in the course of the service, 2 of them read with ease two chapters of the Gospel of John."[18] This organisation, however, had collapsed by 1872 because of a lack of adequate instructors and funding. But the colonial government was set on enforcing its deculturation policy so it applied to the Canadian Mission in Trinidad for help to run missions for the Indians in Grenada. Accordingly, the *Mission to the East Indian Immigrants* was established in 1884 under the authority of the

Canadian Presbyterian Mission Church.[19] The Grenada Population Census 1891 indicated that this Mission had succeeded in converting 165 Indians.[20]

Significant to the colony's assimilative agenda was its Anglicising policy. Anglicanism was considered by the British as the official religion of Grenada despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Grenadian population, particularly Afro-Grenadians, were Roman Catholics.[21] The French had ceded Grenada to the British in 1763 and subsequently the British embarked on an operation to remake Grenada culturally into a thoroughgoing English colony, an Anglicising process which continued into the early twentieth century. For example, towns, streets and parishes were renamed.[22] Also, attempts were made to weaken the influence of the Roman Catholic Church by omitting Catholic officials from government and withdrawing government grants to the Church.[23] This Anglicising drive was highly active when the Indians were introduced into Grenada in 1857. It was not surprising, therefore, that the majority of Indians were later to be found as members of the Anglican Church. In 1891, out of a total of 2,432 Indians in Grenada, sixty-one per cent or 1,501 were Anglicans, 165 were Presbyterians and 185 Roman Catholics. There were 509 Hindus and seventy-two Muslims. In other words, within thirty-four years of their arrival seventy-six per cent of the Indian population was already converted to Christianity, particularly to Anglicanism.[24] In addition, the elementary schools established by the Anglican Church as well as the other denominations served as the primary bearers of the prescribed roles and dominant value-orientation of the Grenadian Creole world. They functioned as primary agencies in the cultural integration of the Indian minority group.[25]

Secondly, the duration of the indenture period and the size of the Indian population directly affected the cultural process. The indenture system functioned for only thirty-three years in Grenada (1857-1890) and only 3,200 Indian labourers were imported. Grenada, as a result, did not experience the constantly increasing influx of new Indian immigrants as was the case in Trinidad and Guyana where the importation of such labourers continued until 1917.[26] During the period 1845-1917 Trinidad imported 143,939 Indian labourers while Guyana imported 238,909.[27] With each shipment of labourers the cultural vivacity of the Indian community in these countries was replenished. This was in contrast to what pertained in Grenada. Consequently, there was a very early break in the communication between Indians in Grenada and India, which in turn contributed towards the rapid decline of the traditional culture. Even communication between Indians in Grenada and Trinidad was limited, despite their close proximity. The capacity to resist the cultural influence of the wider society was based on the frequency of arrival and the number of Indians arriving. The higher the frequency of arrival and the larger their number, the better able Indians in Grenada would have been to maintain their cultural identity. Furthermore, the small size and low density of the Indian population, combined with other host factors, contributed towards their cultural integration. It is reasonable to suggest that if the density of the Indian population were higher, there would have been a greater possibility of resisting the proselytising activities of the Christian churches and other agencies of cultural oppression in Grenada.

Thirdly, the geographical size of Grenada (133 square miles) did not permit the establishment of Indian communities that were isolated from the wider society, as was the case in Trinidad.[28] Indians in Grenada could not have avoided daily interactions with the

larger black population, who had already adopted most of the eurocentric Christian customs. Compared to the relatively large size of Trinidad (1,980 square miles), where Indian communities developed in relative isolation and were able to establish a base of resistance against the cultural dominance of the wider society, a similar option was not available to the Indians in Grenada.[29] Thus the geographical or physical size of Grenada facilitated the cultural integration of Indians.

Finally, in analysing the cultural history of the Indian population one must also take into account that an Indian middle class never developed in Grenada as was the case in Trinidad and Guyana, where this class was in formation even during the period of indenture, and consolidated its position through maintaining its linkages with the mass of the Indian population serving as its socio-cultural/ethnic base.[30] From this base it contested the hegemony of the dominant classes in the society, even while its principal concerns were to secure its own class interests. In Grenada, the emergence of Indian middle class elements was late in coming, and did so at a time when the social system had already established the terms of their incorporation within the Grenadian mainstream: essentially, as persons devoid of Indian cultural support.[31] As a consequence, the Indians who were drawn into the middle class in Grenada did so with limited cultural support from their ethnic base.

The combination of these factors, all working simultaneously, meant that the Indians' effort to resist forces of cultural integration was weak, and their attempts to recreate or reformulate aspects of their ancestral culture were always limited. In such a situation, Indians, as a group, were deficient in their level of cultural confidence. Confidence in its culture makes a community confident in its sense of selfhood and in its

relationship with the wider society. The active practice of one's culture results in the establishment of a cultural presence and serves to define a people. The strength of one's cultural presence is a great aid in strengthening the significance of the group in any particular space, time or condition.[32] In fact, cultural practice is also a tool for negotiating space. The Indian community in Grenada had limited opportunity for cultural manoeuvre and today many have had little acquaintance with Indian customs or activities. As a result, they are quick to refrain from participation in any such activities at the mere mention of them. The following statement by Joseph Lalite, a Grenadian schoolteacher of Indian descent, certainly points to this situation:

> There is so much about my traditional Indian culture that I don't know. As a boy my grandmother sang Hindi songs, but we never saw it as important. If we had learnt them where would we use it, I saw it as having no place.[33]

Such sentiments are an indication of the relatively unchallenged sway of the integration process in generally eliminating ethnic, social and cultural peculiarities among the Indians. While they resisted integration by recreating or reformulating a few traditional cultural elements, it seems that accommodation became the dominant mode of cultural engagement employed by the Indians. Understandably, by the second half of the twentieth century the overwhelming majority of Indians in Grenada were fully integrated into Grenada's Creole culture. In 1960 out of a total Indian population of 3,769 there were only eight Hindus, six Muslims and twelve persons who were not members of any particular religion. However, 3,743 were Christians, that is, 99.3% of the Indian community.[34]

Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that during the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Indian religion and culture were relatively visible in

Grenada. Not only were there Hindus and Muslims, but also cultural festivals such as Hosay were observed.[35] The Muharram or Hosay festival was observed sporadically in Grenada from the late 1850s to the 1930s.[36] In fact, Hosay had emerged as the most important and spectacular festival of the Indian diaspora in the nineteenth century, collectively celebrated by both Hindus and Muslims.[37] The plantation labour regime provided an overarching commonality of experience to the Indian immigrants, irrespective of inherited differences of creed and caste. Additionally, the structure of Hosay and the procession presented an adequate frame for the expression of community aspirations of the Indian immigrants and their descendants. Moreover, most Indian immigrants were from northern India where Muharram was a popular public festival and were thus familiar with the rituals and observances associated with it.[38] The festival and the procession incorporated a spectrum of practices, which allowed for participation by all the Indian immigrants irrespective of caste and religious affiliations.

It is not surprising that this festival was frequently observed in the early years of the Indians' presence in Grenada, when the proselytising by the Christian churches and other forces hostile to Indian traditions was not fully effective:

> The coolies have had their usual annual demonstration of the Hosse. It has not been a grand affair, but, the few concerned in the arrangement of the show in St. George's seem to have been zealous and earnest. In such places as Trinidad and Demerara—where the coolie population is something to reckon—this rite of the Mahommedan coolies is, generally, celebrated with much stir, and at no small expense.[39]

It is claimed that the last Hosay procession was held in the 1930s in the parish of St. Andrew's and was stopped by the police.[40] It can be proposed that the Hosay celebrations, observed in the public domain, were a strategy employed by Indians in their attempt to claim their cultural presence or space in Grenada. However, as cultural

integration became increasingly prevalent among the Indian population during the twentieth century, this festival was observed very irregularly and eventually completely disappeared after the 1930s. Its disappearance from Grenada is an indication of the extent to which Indians had been distanced from their earlier traditions and identity.

There were other Indian traditions that withstood the test of time. In the 1950s, there was an Indian orchestra that played Indian music accompanied by Indian dances in the parish of St. Patrick's where there was a concentration of Indians.[41] Although surviving data points to only Christian marriages among the Indian community, one can imagine that during the period of indenture traditional Indian marriages might have taken place. However, arranged marriages continued to be practised in Grenada up to the 1930s under Christian rites.[42] The Indians were also able to maintain a number of their traditional foods and methods of cooking. The survival of these various Indian cultural practices reinforces the argument that there was a dual process of cultural engagement within the Indian community, and implies that the colonial government was not completely effective in compelling the Indian population to shed all its traditions.

There were also attempts by members of the Indian community to resist the cultural influence of the wider society. In 1954, for example, Fredrick Mirjah formed the *Grenada East Indian Cultural Association*.[43] The main purpose of this organisation was to stimulate and develop an Indian cultural consciousness among Indians and the wider society. Therefore, it was not surprising that the *Grenada East Indian Cultural Association* had organised the centenary celebrations of the Indians' presence, on May 1 1957. Other activities such as the observance of India's independence were also organised.[44] However, by the middle of the 1960s this Association too had disintegrated,

indicating the large degree of cultural negation among the Indians. The vast majority of Indians in Grenada did not consider it essential to have such organisations.[45]

Race relations with the majority Afro-Grenadian population

Competition for scarce economic resources usually shapes race relations in multi-racial societies. This sort of competition is generally manifested in racial prejudice, expressed in actions such as aggression and avoidance behaviour.[46] Indian immigration to Grenada was expected to create competition for estate work, thereby lowering wages and compelling Africans to return to the estates in larger numbers, but this expectation was never fulfilled. On the contrary, in the view of one colonial official, the Africans were not economically threatened by the presence of Indians:

> While immigration may serve to stimulate the native labourer to the exercise of greater industry by the healthy competition it will excite… the emancipated class are reluctant to continue the avocations with which so many better associations are connected…. They all more or less aspire to become "independent proprietors" and embrace every opportunity to purchase bits of freeholds in order to sever themselves from their connections with their former masters…. They look with no jealous eye upon the coolies, on the contrary they hail his arrival with joy and seem to regard him as the instrument destined eventually to release them from the necessity of daily manual labour.[47]

Grenada faced economic problems throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly in its sugar industry. Actually, it was during the period of Indian indenture (1857-1890) that Grenada's sugar economy experienced a severe depression leading to an end of sugar production for export.[48] The peasantry was another area of Grenada's economy where Indians and Africans shared and cultivated crops mainly for export, thereby leaving little opportunity for competition at the local level. Also, from the second

half of the twentieth century Grenada's public and private sectors became popular areas where both groups searched for employment. However, being a small community, Indians were not a threat to Africans for economic resources and this is partly responsible for the cordial nature of relations between both groups. In the period 1857-1960, the Indian population ranged from 2,000 to 3,767, while the African community ranged from 35,000 to 86,000.[49] Consequently, in every aspect of the economic sphere Indians were outnumbered and were not seen as depriving Africans of any resources.

Unlike Grenada, in Jamaica it was evident that economic competition was directly connected to Indian-African antagonism or hostility. In Jamaica during the 1930s, anti-Indian sentiments were founded on the potential threat Indians created in competing for employment in a situation of scarce job opportunities among essentially agricultural labourers.[50] These workers were attached to the sugar and banana industries which were both operating under volatile global circumstances and were subjected to retrenchment in this period. It was estimated that as many as three persons were competing for each available job, a situation that led to the depressing of wages since there was a large supply of reserve labourers.[51] On the other hand, based on the small size of the Indian population in Grenada, Indians were not capable of successfully protecting (if required) their interests against the dominant African population.

From the early twentieth century the level of interaction between both groups gradually increased because most Indians acquired lands in areas where Africans were already settled. The establishment of mixed communities, mainly in the parishes of St. Patrick's and St. Andrew's, caused an increase in the daily interactions between these two groups which, over time, facilitated an improvement in race relations. Nevertheless,

with this growing contact, racial stereotyping might have been intensified because the differences between both groups were now under closer scrutiny. The clearest indication of tension between the groups is the derogatory terms used. Indians labelled Africans as *nigger* and *congo*, which implied that Africans were wild, stupid and ugly, while Africans called Indians *coolie*, implying that the Indians were so debased and degraded that they were at a lower level of humanity.[52] Both groups also composed songs or rhymes that expressed their feelings of disgust at each other.

Because of culture-bound attitudes and values operating within each group Indian-African sexual relations were rare before the twentieth century, even though there was a shortage of Indian women in Grenada.[53] As one scholar pointed out,

> Given the prevalence of miscegenation throughout the history of the Caribbean, its relative absence among Indians and individuals of African ancestry up to the end of nineteenth century is all the more revealing of racial attitudes and relations than mere cooperation in the workplace.[54]

However, as the twentieth century progressed, such inter-racial unions became widespread. As a consequence of these unions, a new social group was added to the demographic composition of the island, namely the *dougla*, a person of mixed Indian and African ancestry. The term d*ougla* had a derogatory meaning similar to "bastard" and was derived from the Bhojpuri dialect spoken by most Indian immigrants to the Caribbean.[55] This *dougla* population became more evident with each successive generation; however, official data on this group is not available. Initially, Africans had been more accommodating and tolerant than Indians with respect to the acceptance of *douglas* and inter-racial unions. Over time, the negative connotation faced by these mixed persons disappeared and both Indians and Africans accepted them. Further, most Indians

in Grenada assume that there is limited opportunity to find suitable Indian partners since the Indian population pool is very small. As a result, a significant number of Indians tend to extend their options by turning to the African and *dougla* populations to find companions.[56] This obviously affects the growth of the Indian community but simultaneously facilitates a closer relationship between both groups.

It seems logical to suggest that with the growing mixed population and their general acceptance by both Indian and African families, the gap that existed between these groups was being increasingly breached, since these mixed individuals were able to communicate and identify with both worlds and in turn brought both races closer. This formulation, however, gives almost exclusive weight to human agency and ignores completely the importance of process. It was the process of cultural integration between both groups that facilitated a new interactive platform for communication on terms which did not previously exist. This common cultural platform intensified during the twentieth century and brought both races closer.

As stated earlier, the establishment of communities that were comprised of both Indians and Africans contributed towards an improvement in the nature of race relations over the years. This factor was particularly influential when, by the late nineteenth century, Indians began rapidly to adopt Christianity and other aspects of Grenadian culture.[57] With the intensification of the process of cultural integration there was a growing self-identification among Indians with Grenadian culture. Therefore, by the 1950s or even earlier, the Indians had integrated to such an extent that Grenada had become a less culturally fragmented society. Consequently, the racial stereotyping that existed within both groups became less significant.

Grenada's system of education also played an important role in Indian-African relations. Both primary and secondary schools in Grenada enrolled children from diverse racial backgrounds. Thus an environment was created whereby children from both groups interacted on a daily basis, which in turn facilitated the breaking down of racial differences. To this end, religious denominations played a pivotal role as homogenising agencies among Indians and Africans in Grenada, a role centred on the Christianising mission of these groups. The schools and churches served as a common meeting ground for Indians and Africans. These formal structures were the bearers of the prescribed roles and common value-orientation of the wider society. They became spaces within which the changing tone of race relations between the two groups would be structured.[58]

All social, economic and political institutions were (and are still) shared by both Indians and Africans and thus indirectly functioned as integrating agents among the races in Grenada. Since, in this context, race separation was extremely restricted, Africans and Indians were forced to interact closely with each other on a daily, routine and non-competitive basis, resulting in a drastic breakdown in the common misunderstanding and stereotyping that has long existed. At the same time, however, closer and more intense interaction has not automatically produced harmonious race relations. The evidence suggests that there were cases when such interactions were, in fact, occasions for awakening racial prejudices based on the mutually shared racial stereotypes inherited from colonialism. Though these cases were few, greater interactions between Indians and Africans did not, necessarily, eradicate racial conflict. Furthermore, in Grenada political parties did not have racial or ethnic allegiances because the demographic composition of the island eliminated this possibility. This is quite unlike territories such as Guyana and

Trinidad and Tobago where political leaders commonly appeal to ethnic and racial sentiments in order to enhance their mass support, which has all too often resulted in the political polarisation of these societies.

In Grenada the common cultural platform which emerged as a result of the cultural integration between these groups brought both races closer and played a direct role in the waning of the significance of racial stereotypes by the middle of the twentieth century. In addition, the small size of the Indian population was fundamental in shaping the nature of that relationship because it determined the conditions that the economic resources were shared between these races, and it mitigated any political influences which might have negatively impacted on their relationship with the African population. These historical circumstances have allowed the Grenadian society to move forward without situations of racial hostility and violence.

The Indians' contribution to Grenada's society

It remains a moot point whether Indian immigration to Grenada was necessary. Whether it was successful is also a matter of perspective, but at best its success was marginal.[59] Nonetheless, Grenada's sugar industry neither expanded nor significantly improved during Indian immigration. According to Brizan, it was during the period of Indian indenture (1857-1890) that Grenada's sugar economy experienced a severe depression leading to an end of sugar production for export.[60] On the other hand, the Indian immigrants played a crucial role in the expansion and development of Grenada's cocoa industry. Some were indentured on cocoa estates but the majority had cultivated this crop

on their private holdings, after completing their indenture contracts. The *St. George's Chronicle* commented in 1876 on this phenomenon:

> It is to be remarked that since their introduction into Grenada, there has been no increase of the crops of sugar or rum. It will be said on the other side, that production of cocoa has increased, owing to the withdrawal of so many labour [sic] from the sugar estates—and that if both production[s] are looked at [at] once, it will be seen how far the labour of the coolies has benefited the island. Many coolies have[,] apparently, settled in the colony; have purchased lands and settled down as growers of cocoa, provisions, and livestock….[61]

Up to the end of the twentieth century most Indians had remained significantly involved in the island's agricultural sector.[62] While this sector has experienced its share of frustration, the Indian community, like their fellow Afro-Grenadians, continued to produce food for local consumption.

A minority of Indians have been fortunate enough to become large proprietors. By the 1960s, there were at least three Indians who became conspicuous property owners. Norbert Nyack became the owner of Belmont Estate in St. Patrick's, and also owned other parcels of land that, in time, made it possible for him to become one of the largest producers and exporters of nutmegs in Grenada. From his success in the nutmeg industry he was then able to acquire real estate property in the town of Grenville, which is still very valuable.[63] In 1964, R. M. Bhola bought two small estates in St. Andrew's, covering about a hundred acres in total. Bhola concentrated on the cultivation of bananas rather than nutmegs or cocoa.[64] The other notable Indian who acquired a large acreage of land was Mr. Ramdhanny, also from the parish of St. Andrew's. He was a major cocoa producer and exporter in Grenada. The wealth acquired from cocoa cultivation allowed him to invest in other business enterprises.[65]

In every profession Indians have been qualified and provided their services to the Grenadian public.[66] It is interesting to note that one of the first female doctors in Grenada is Jennifer Isaac-Japal, a woman of Indian descent, who is not only an inspiration to Indian women but also to all Grenadian women in their quest for success and equal opportunity.[67] Since the 1950s, a large number of Indians have worked in the teaching profession, educating the Grenadian population at all levels. One must point out that the Indian community played a very instrumental role in the establishment of the McDonald College in the parish of St. Patrick's. Due to the agitation of the *Grenada East Indian Cultural Association* to the Church of Scotland in Grenada, this secondary school was founded on 21 January 1963.[68] Funds were raised by the Association to assist in the building of the school. Initially, it was established to provide secondary education for children of Indian descent who lived in the surrounding parishes. However, the school welcomed students from the wider society and thus has played a fundamental role in providing an opportunity for secondary education for all since 1963.

In the political realm of Grenada's history, persons of Indian descent have also made remarkable contributions. There have been members of this community in every government since 1961. In every national or general election between 1961 and 2003 persons of Indian ancestry have participated in the political process.[69] The inclusion of Indians in popular party elections enhanced their prominence in the mainstream of national politics and this gave a greater impetus to their engagement with Grenadian society, even at the highest level. Their involvement was not based on race nor did the Indian politicians derive any political mileage as a result of this factor. Their acceptance into these political parties and their being elected by the Grenadian people clearly

indicates the Indians' inclusion into Grenada's society. Further, the ordinary members of the Indian community participated in the political process by exercising their right to vote, and some Indians who had become members of the upper economic class made large financial contributions to the major political parties.[70]

Conclusion

The indentured labour scheme was directly responsible for the establishment of a permanent Indian community in Grenada during the late nineteenth century. From that period to the present, Indians have become completely incorporated into Grenada's society. In every aspect of Grenadian life, Indians have identified with it, participated in it and contributed to it. This degree of identification and participation results from the cultural integration of Indians, which in turn, has led to their acceptance by the wider society. Also, the nature of race relations between Indians and the dominant Afro-Grenadian population was and continues to be peaceful. The Indian community did not pose an economic threat to the African population and therefore created a situation of very limited racial tension. In addition, the process of cultural integration between both groups facilitated a new interactive platform for communication on terms which did not previously exist. This common cultural platform, which intensified during the twentieth century, brought both races closer. The above discussion clearly demonstrates that the Indian community have progressed from the status of immigrants or transient migrants to permanent citizens of Grenada.

Notes

[1] Ron Sookram, "Grenada on the eve of Indian Immigration" (*The Arts Journal* 1, 2005), 26-28.
[2] Beverley Steele, *Grenada: A History of its People* (Oxford: Macmillan Education, 2003), 185-87.
[3] George Roberts and Joycelyn Byrne, "Summary Statistics on Indenture and Associated Migration Affecting the West Indies, 1834-1918" (*Population Studies* 20, 1966), 129.
[4] Roberts and Byrne, 129. Only 392 Indian immigrants were repatriated to India. Some had also migrated to other territories such as Trinidad and British Guiana but the vast majority remained in Grenada as permanent settlers.
[5] *St. George's Chronicle and Grenada Gazette*, 11 August 1877.
[6] Ron Sookram, "The History and Culture of Indians in Grenada, 1857-2003" (Ph.D. diss., University of the West Indies, 2005), 176.
[7] *St. George's Chronicle*, 11 August 1877.
[8] Grenada Registrar Office, 1880-1920. Examination of documents from the Grenada Registrar's Office dealing with land transactions indicates that this was the average size of land purchased by Indians.
[9] Sookram, "History and Culture," 177. The rate for one acre ranged from as low as £5 to as high as £15 during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
[10] CO/ 104/ 18. Minutes of the Executive Council 1881 to 1882, 30 June 1881.
[11] Creole culture is essentially the ways of life that have developed in the Americas specifically in those societies where plantations / colonialism have served as a dominant element in the social structure. Creolization is a cultural process which might be divided into two aspects: acculturation, the absorption of one culture by another, and "interculturation," a more reciprocal and spontaneous process of enrichment and intermixture on both sides. For further information see Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 290-305.
[12] Sookram, "History and Culture," 96-7.
[13] Ibid., 120. The Rainbow City celebration is an annual event in the parish of St. Andrew's which marks the emancipation from slavery in Grenada. St. Patrick's Day is also an annual event celebrating the historical significance of the parish of St. Patrick's.
[14] Sookram, "History and Culture," 146.
[15] *St. George's Chronicle*, 5 April 1862.
[16] Ibid., 20 May 1865.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid., 10 May 1884. The Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia started the Presbyterian Mission among the Indians in the Caribbean in 1868. With Trinidad as a base, the mission was extended to Grenada, St. Lucia and British Guiana by 1885.
[20] Grenada Population Census, 1891.
[21] Steele, 200.
[22] Ibid., 68.
[23] Ibid., 102-4.
[24] Grenada Population Census, 1891.
[25] Sookram, "History and Culture," 111.
[26] For further information see Walton Look Lai, *Indentured Labour, Caribbean Sugar: Chinese and Indian Migrants to the British West Indies, 1838-1918* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).
[27] Roberts and Byrne, 129.
[28] For further information see Gerad I. M. Tikasingh, "The Establishment of the Indians in Trinidad, 1870-1900" (Ph.D. diss., University of the West Indies, 1973).

[29] Sookram, "History and Culture," 152.
[30] See Clem Seecharan, *'Tiger in the Stars': The Anatomy of Indian Achievement in British Guiana 1919-29* (London, Macmillan Education, 1997), 231-309. Also Bridget Brereton, 'Social organisation and Class, Racial and Cultural conflict in Nineteenth century Trinidad' in Kevin A. Yelvington, ed., *Trinidad Ethnicity* (London: Macmillan Education, 1993), 33-55.
[31] Sookram, "History and Culture," 276-77
[32] Ibid., 155.
[33] Joseph Lalite, Interview by author, 26 July 2001.
[34] Grenada Population Census, 1960.
[35] Hosay, Muharram tadjah or Hussay was in the nineteenth century celebrated on the first ten days of the first Islamic month of Muharram, or twelve new moons after the last celebration (since the Islamic calendar was a lunar one with alternating months of thirty and twenty nine days). The festival commemorated the death of the Prophets' grandsons Hassan and Hosein and especially the latter's death in the battle of Kerbala at the hands of the Ummaid enemies of the house of Ali.
[36] Kumar Mahabir, "East Indians in Grenada: A study in Absorption" in Bahadur Singh, ed., *The Other India: Indians in the Caribbean* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1987), 381.
[37] Prabhu P. Mohapatra, "The Politics of Representation in the Indian Labour Diaspora: West Indies, 1880-1920" (*Archives of Indian Labour*, 2003. http://www.indialabourarchives.org/publications/prabhu2.htm).
[38] Ibid.
[39] *St. George's Chronicle*, 3 March 1877.
[40] Mahabir, 381. I continue to investigate other archival and oral sources for further elaboration of this point.
[41] Ibid., 383.
[42] Sookram, "History and Culture," 121.
[43] Ibid., 137.
[44] Ibid., 138.
[45] Ibid., 140.
[46] Pierre van den Berghe, *Race and Ethnicity: Essays in Comparative Sociology* (New York: Basic Books, 1970; London, 1976), 20-41.
[47] CO/ 101/ 114. "Immigration Office to Governor Kortright," 6 March 1858.
[48] George Brizan, *Grenada: Island of Conflict*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1998), 210.
[49] Grenada Population Census Reports, 1881-1960.
[50] Verene Shepherd, "Indians and Blacks in Jamaica in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: A Micro-Study of the Foundations of Race Relations," in Mahin Gosine, ed., *The Coolie Connection: From the Orient to the Occident* (New York, Windsor Press, 1992), 186.
[51] Shepherd, 187.
[52] Beverley Steele, "East Indian Indenture and the Work of the Presbyterian Church among the Indians in Grenada" (*Caribbean Quarterly* 22, 1976), 34. Also, Gordon St. Bernard, Interview by author, 20 July 2001.
[53] *St. George's Chronicle*, 21 March 1867. For Grenada as a whole, in 1867 there were 1,301 Indian men to 557 women; in 1881 out of a total of 1,572 persons there were 959 males and 613 females, the males exceeding the females by 346, at 56.44%.
[54] Edward L. Cox, "Indian Migration to Grenada and St. Vincent, 1857-1885" (paper presented at the International Conference on Asian Diasporas to the Americas, Trinidad and Tobago, August 2002), 21-22.
[55] Rhoda Reddock, "Jahaji Bhai: The emergence of a Dougla Poetics in Trinidad and Tobago" (*Identities* 5, 1999), 569-601.
[56] Sookram, "History and Culture," 256.
[57] *Grenada Population Census*, 1891. In 1891, of the 2,432 Indians in Grenada, 509 were Hindus, 72 were Muslims, 165 were Presbyterians, while 1,501 were Anglicans, and 185 were Roman Catholics.
[58] Sookram, "History and Culture," 254.
[59] Ibid., 76.
[60] Brizan, 210.
[61] *St. George's Chronicle*, 30 December 1876.
[62] Sookram, "History and Culture," 220.
[63] Ibid., 187.

[64] Richie Donald, "A Force to be Emulated" in Anna McMahon, ed., *Ralph Mathias Bhola: 70 Glorious Years* (St. George's, Grenada, 1992), 15
[65] Sookram, "History and Culture," 187.
[66] Steele, "East Indian Indenture," 37.
[67] Jennifer Isaac-Japal, Interview by author, 8 May 2006.
[68] Records of the Church of Scotland and Canadian Mission, St. George's, Grenada, 1970. Also Verda Benjamin, Interview by author, 1 March 2001. Benjamin was Secretary to the Association.
[69] Grenada, Report of Legislative Council Elections, 1952-1976, and Grenada Government Gazette, Report of General Elections, 1984-2003. For example, R. M. Bhola, Oliver Archibald, Kenny Lalsingh, Rupert Japal, and Chrysler Thomas.
[70] Archie Singham, *The Hero and the Crowd in a Colonial Polity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), 284.